

Question for written answer E-005347/2017
to the Commission
Rule 130
Adam Szejnfeld (PPE)

Subject: Sustainability in EU FTAs in the context of the EU Court of Justice ruling

The European Union's trade policy should promote, not only economic growth, but also social development and environmental protection. Coherence between these three elements is the basis for achieving sustainability.

The European Union seeks to include sustainability provisions in trade agreements with both industrialised and developing countries, in particular regarding labour rights and environmental protection. However, there are some voices saying that provisions without any direct sanctions resulting from non-compliance thereof do not fulfil their function and are ineffective. On the other hand, due to the significant differences in the level of development of individual countries throughout the world, much poorer developing countries cannot be expected to be able to fulfil all their international obligations in the field of labour law or environmental protection quickly.

In May this year, the EU Court of Justice ruled on the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Singapore and decided that sustainability laws were an integral part of EU trade policy and fell within its exclusive competence. In connection with the recognition of the European Commission's dominant role in this respect, I am asking whether the Court's judgment will shape the chapters on sustainability in free trade agreements and whether the Commission is considering imposing any sanctions for non-compliance?